

Community Navigators

As part of its [Criminal Justice Investment Initiative](#), the Manhattan District Attorney's Office (DANY) is making investments to ensure that people receive services to support positive outcomes and prevent any future contact with law enforcement. Therefore, DANY is investing in a pilot program to create Community Navigators, which will connect individuals to the resources and services they need to prevent future crime and re-victimization in order to make a strong impact on public safety over a long period of time.

Description of Program

The Community Navigator pilot will begin to develop a network of trained peers and social workers—community navigators—to work with individuals to locate, connect, engage, and stay involved with the services they need. Navigators will be mobile and meet people where they are and serve as the bridge to guide individuals across different systems, city agencies, and organizations to ensure they are connected with the services and resources they need to meet their needs and achieve their goals. Additionally, they will participate in an educational fellowship program that allows them to advance their education and support their career development through meaningful work in the social services field.

The [Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College](#) will be responsible for managing the Community Navigator pilot, including recruiting, hiring, training, and managing individuals to work as community navigators as well as the fellowship program. They will also collaborate with city agencies and community-based service providers to explore needs and to facilitate cooperation and coordination.

During the pilot, community navigators will focus on working in East Harlem with youth (ages 14 to 21) who are at risk of becoming involved in the justice system and with victims of domestic violence. Ultimately, the network of navigators will expand to other Manhattan neighborhoods that experience many factors that have an impact on crime, and will also work with youth and adults who are involved in the justice system, other victims of crime, and people returning to neighborhoods from incarceration.

Rationale

Although New York City has many services and resources available for victims of crime and individuals involved in the justice system or at risk of becoming involved, there is a desire among service providers to break down service silos and increase cooperation and coordination to ensure people who would benefit from resources and services can access them. Many experts and practitioners reported to CUNY ISLG during its community outreach that a coordinated effort to connect people with available services and resources was needed.

The Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College is well-suited to manage the Community Navigator pilot. In addition to its commitment to social justice and human rights, reputation as a premier school of social work, and position as a New York City public college, it is located in East Harlem and already collaborates with many service providers throughout Manhattan.